

**To:** Matlock, Dennis[Matlock.Dennis@epa.gov]  
**From:** Seneca, Roy  
**Sent:** Fri 1/10/2014 12:28:06 PM  
**Subject:** FW: Charleston Gazette (1-10) Thousands of residents warned to not use water

**From:** Seneca, Roy  
**Sent:** Friday, January 10, 2014 7:26 AM  
**To:** Garvin, Shawn; Early, William; Ryan, Daniel; D'Andrea, Michael; duteau, helen; White, Terri-A; Heron, Donna; Smith, Bonnie; Sternberg, David; schaffer, joan; Capacasa, Jon; Hodgkiss, Kathy; Wright, Dave; Matsinger, Josie; Cron, Mitch; Heston, Gerald; Burns, Adrian; Burns, Francis; damm, thomas; Miller, Linda; Ferrell, Mark; Brown-Perry, Kinshasa; Colip, Matthew; Howell, Amie  
**Subject:** Charleston Gazette (1-10) Thousands of residents warned to not use water  
**Importance:** High

## Thousands of residents warned to not use water

### Chemical leaked into Elk affects W.Va. American Water customers

By Rachel Molenda

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Residents in eight counties and part of a ninth were told Thursday evening not to drink, cook with or wash with water supplied by West Virginia American Water after a leak earlier in the day at a chemical facility along the Elk River.

Any water supplied by West Virginia American Water in Kanawha, Putnam, Boone, Jackson and Lincoln counties was to be used only for flushing toilets and putting out fires, officials said just before 6 p.m. A couple hours later, Roane, Clay and Logan counties were added to the warning. The Culloden area of Cabell County was also affected. Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin declared a state of emergency in all of those counties.

Customers of several public service districts, including Lincoln, Queen Shoals, Reamer, Culloden and Hurricane, were also told not to use their water.

The ban could affect more than 100,000 West Virginia American Water customers, including restaurants, businesses and hospitals. Residents swarmed grocery stores, convenience stores and anywhere else with bottled water Thursday evening, and shelves were quickly depleted.

Hours after water company officials said their treatment facility -- which is near the leak site on

the Elk River -- could handle the leak from Freedom Industries on Barlow Drive, Tomblin said: "Nobody really knows how dangerous it could be. However, it is in the system.

"It's just so important, according to the health department, as well as West Virginia American: Please don't drink, don't wash with, don't do anything with the water," the governor said Thursday night at the state Capitol.

Water was being transported into the affected counties, and emergency officials said they planned to set up distribution centers.

Col. Mike Cadle at the state Air National Guard's 130th Airlift Wing said 51 tractor-trailers loaded with water were headed to West Virginia from a Federal Emergency Management Agency facility in Maryland.

A C-130 cargo aircraft took off from Yeager Airport at 7:05 p.m. for Martinsburg to pick up the water. Cadle said that if the trucks arrived too late to fly the water in Thursday, the trucks would continue driving through the night and arrive at the 130th on Friday morning for distribution.

It was not clear Thursday night what time distribution centers would be set up today, but Lt. Col. Todd Harrell of the state National Guard said a center would be set up at the Charleston Civic Center to serve customers from Kanawha and Jackson counties. Another center would be set up at the Putnam County Courthouse in Winfield, he said.

Distribution centers would also be set up at the 911 center in Lincoln County, Queen Shoals in Clay County and the Sharples Volunteer Fire Department in Logan County, Harrell said.

Distribution points for Boone, Roane and Cabell counties were yet to be determined late Thursday.

A few places with water had already said they would let people fill up containers today, including Bartlett-Chapman Funeral Home in St. Albans, Chapman Funeral Home in Hurricane and the West Hamlin Volunteer Fire Department.

Schools had been ordered closed today in Kanawha, Putnam, Boone, Jackson, Clay and Lincoln counties as of 10 p.m. Thursday.

Tomblin said he expected the state of emergency to still be in effect this morning. He said it would stay until the state Department of Health and Human Resources, the Department of Environmental Protection and the water company say the water is safe.

He called the chemical -- 4-methylcyclohexane methanol, according to a DEP spokesman -- a "sudsing agent" and said, "It could take some time, they can't tell us how long it will take, to get the system flushed clean because some of these pipes go out as far as 60 miles."

The chemical is used in the processing of coal.

Places that don't use water from West Virginia American Water are not affected. That includes the cities of Spencer and St. Albans, where Mayor Dick Calloway, whose city gets its water directly from the Coal River, said his town's residents would not fall under the "do not use" order.

Kanawha Sheriff Johnny Rutherford said the county's 911 center got about a dozen calls about citizens getting into scuffles over water at stores. County officials urged residents not to rush out to try to buy water, and police were asked to step up patrols around convenience stores.

Philip Toliver of Charleston came to the Rite-Aid on Charleston's East End because the one on Bridge Road had already sold out of bottled water, he said. He bought six cases.

"[I thought] 'I think I need to get some water,'" Toliver said upon learning of the chemical leak. He said if the state of emergency stretched on for more than a few days, he would consider leaving town for a while.

West Virginia American Water President Jeff McIntyre said at a news conference that the company was "fairly confident" earlier in the day that its plant could handle the treatment of the chemical.

"It's clear the chemical has infiltrated the water," McIntyre said. "In an abundance of caution, we are taking these steps today."

When asked what might happen if a person consumed the chemical, McIntyre didn't get specific, only saying "it's not particularly lethal in its usage form" and the effects of the chemical would depend on its concentration.

Dr. Rahul Gupta, chief health officer for the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department, said restaurants, bars, day-care centers and other businesses with a health permit in Kanawha and Putnam counties would be sent a message to "cease operations immediately."

Gupta said there are about 1,200 health department permits issued in Kanawha County and about 300 in Putnam County, where the Kanawha department has temporarily taken over health enforcement duties.

Kanawha County Commission President Kent Carper said the county emergency operations center was open and emergency crews were assessing their response.

"Earlier [Thursday], we were assured there was no harm to the public," Carper said. "We'll do blame-assignment later. Now we have to deal with it."

Carper said the do-not-use order would effectively shut down restaurants, nursing homes and any other establishment that relies on water.

"I have been promised by the governor himself that we'll have any resources we need," he said. "I predict it's going to be a long night."

Mike Dorsey, director of emergency response and homeland security for the state Department of Environmental Protection, said his division learned of the incident around noon from Department of Environmental Protection air-quality officials -- who had received odor complaints about the facility as early as 7:30 a.m.

The DEP's air-quality officials discovered the spill -- which the company had not self-reported to regulatory agencies -- and called Dorsey's unit, which handles such matters for the DEP.

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